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Selected Speeches and News Releases

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IN THIS ISSUE:

Statement —

Prepared for delivery by Secretary of Agriculture Edward R. Madigan, before the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry April 8.

News Releases—

USDA to Increase Fees for Meat Grading and Certification Services

FGIS Revises Official Grain Inspection Certification

USDA Revises P.L. 480 Title I Country Allocations for Fiscal Year 1992

No-Till Rice Offers Headstart on Planting, Profits

USDA Announces Final Compliance Figures for 1991 Acreage Reduction Program

USDA Meeting on Foreign Animal and Poultry Diseases Slated for June 2-4

USDA Seeks Comment on 1993 Acreage Reduction Program for Wheat

Nursing Mothers Need Plenty of Protein

Great Plains Wind Erosion Down Slightly from Last Year

Meat Import Estimate for Second Quarter Below 1992 Trigger

U.S. to Donate Agricultural Commodities to World Food Program

Statement

U.S. Department of Agriculture • Office of Public Affairs

Prepared for delivery by Secretary of Agriculture Edward R. Madigan, before the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, April 8.

Mr. Chairman, it is a privilege for me to appear today to talk with this committee about the management of the Department of Agriculture and most specifically about our organization and field structure. As you know, management is an abiding interest with me. I have repeatedly said that I want my tenure at USDA to be one in which management is given a special focus.

We have been working aggressively to develop new management initiatives and to better coordinate existing ones because of my interest in the subject and because it is absolutely imperative that we respond constructively to the reports we have received.

Therefore, I welcome this Committee's action in calling this hearing. We share a common interest. In many ways management improvements will be made only to the extent we work together. I want to use this opportunity to talk with you about the past, present, and the future for the Department of Agriculture.

Perspectives on the Department of Agriculture

I think it is worthwhile to begin any discussion of the management of the Department of Agriculture by making sure we have an accurate perspective of the institution. In many respects USDA is one of the least understood organizations in our Government. Effective management improvement must be premised on an accurate understanding of the Department and its missions.

The first point I would make is simply that the USDA is a huge organization. With annual outlays at about $62 billion, it is the fourth largest Federal agency in terms of spending. It is one of the larger employers in the Federal Government, ranking sixth with about 111,000 staff-years. It also supports additional non-Federal employees at the State and local level with its programs. Viewed in an international context, there are only 17 nations of the world with budgets that exceed that of the Department of Agriculture. Viewed in the context of our nation,

USDA spending in FY 1991 exceeded $500 million in 38 of our 50 States. In a private sector context, USDA would rank fourth among U.S. corporations—smaller than General Motors, Exxon, or Ford, but larger than IBM, Mobil, or General Electric. If USDA were considered a bank, based on its credit and lending activities, it would easily be one of the largest banks in the Nation.

Another important factor is the sheer diversity of the Department. That diversity and the changing balance of programs form part of the fabric that makes management of the Department so challenging. Some important facts:

—USDA has programs in 10 of the 17 major budget functions defined by the Executive Branch and the Congress. There is no other agency of Government with programs in so many of the different budget functions.

—Over one half of the Department's budget goes for food assistance programs such as the Food Stamp Program, child nutrition programs, etc. USDA is thus a major factor in the delivery of benefits to our poor citizens throughout the Nation.

—USDA's largest employer is the U.S. Forest Service with nearly 40 percent of the USDA total workforce. It is worth noting that the Forest Service provides more than double the outdoor recreation of any other agency of the Federal Government, providing around 40 percent of the U.S. total. Thus, USDA is a major force in environmental and recreation issues.

—USDA oversees a Federal-State Research partnership which employs over 16,700 scientists in every State and numerous countries around the world. The broad spectrum of this research stretches from food safety to human nutrition to the environment to crop production.

—USDA has a housing loan portfolio of almost $30 billion.

—USDA is a major factor on the international scene with USDA personnel in most embassies around the world and over $8 billion annually in export programs.

—USDA has major responsibilities for the inspection and grading of agricultural products. Some of these services are paid for by industry through user fees amounting to about $400 million annually.

The Department is often criticized as a bloated bureaucracy with an exorbitant number of employees serving a limited clientele. The charge has been made that USDA has nearly one employee for every farmer. This is just not true and we need to dispel such erroneous statements. In addition to managing the traditional farm programs, USDA's mission as

noted above includes responsibilities for managing forestry programs, domestic food assistance programs, research and education activities, marketing programs, meat and poultry inspection programs, rural development, and many other important programs. Therefore, only about 20 percent of the USDA Federal workforce is devoted to administration of programs dealing directly with farmers.

Thus, while the focus of discussion about the Department tends to be on production agriculture, the fact is that USDA provides a wide range of other services to the country. I will talk more about the shifting balance of USDA programs later in this statement.

It is also useful to take a clear look at the organization and management philosophy which has guided the Department for many years. From an organizational standpoint, USDA can be described as a confederation with nine subcabinet offices, 42 constituent agencies, 250 separate programs, and a large number of field offices put in place to carry out those programs. Subcabinet offices, agencies and field structures tend to be organized on a functional basis. Foresters, soil conservationists, nutritionists, scientists, and other specialists essentially have their own agencies. Decisionmaking is highly decentralized with power most often delegated to the state and local levels where the programs actually function on the ground and several programs are operated cooperatively with state and local governments and other public institutions. Emphasis is on solving problems at the local level, by working with citizens rather than by imposing regulations on them.

THE PERFORMANCE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Obviously, we are here to discuss ways to improve the management of the Department of Agriculture. However, we need to understand that the Department has had many achievements since it was created by President Abraham Lincoln in 1862 and, in the last 20 years, it has done a great many important things for the American people. During that time, we have literally seen revolutionary changes in the nature and complexity of USDA programs. We have also seen a significant shifting of priorities within the Department, as some programs have grown and others have receded in the overall scheme of things.

When I came to Washington in 1972, the total budget of the Department was about $11 billion. Over one-third of this money was

spent on farm price and income support programs. Another 40% of the budget in 1972 was spent primarily on programs which we would identify today as discretionary programs, largely in the research, conservation and marketing areas. The remaining 24% of the budget was spent on food assistance programs.

Today, a review of the Department's budget and programs reveals a very different picture. During this fiscal year the Department will spend nearly $62 billion—six times more than was spent in 1972. We are spending about 20% of our budget (down from one-third) on farm price and income support programs. We are spending nearly 54% (up from 24%) for the funding of food assistance programs. We have over 25 million people, a record number, on food stamps and we have a national commitment to continue the expansion of the WIC program which now exceeds 5 million individuals. Discretionary programs including conservation and marketing programs now represent only 27% of our total budget (down from 40%) and are severely constrained under the current budgeting system.

In looking at the past trends, it is also worthwhile to note that:

—Since 1972, five major farm bills have been enacted of increasing scope and complexity. In length alone, farm bills have expanded from the 29 pages of the 1973 farm bill to the 719 pages of the 1990 farm bill. The point is not to criticize anyone for the length of the farm bills but simply to note that the scope of farm bills has expanded greatly. Today, a farm bill authorizes new programs or changes the vast majority of the Department's existing programs, bringing about significant implementation and regulatory problems on a recurring basis. This simply was not the case in the earlier years of the Department.

—The Department, like other Federal agencies, has carried out annual programs in the midst of great uncertainty about funding levels. In 16 of the past 20 years, USDA appropriations have not been enacted by the beginning of the fiscal year. Whatever problems in management the Department may have, they are certainly not helped by placing our managers in this kind of uncertainty year after year.

—The Department has implemented new and expanded programs without additional employees. In fact, USDA's employment in 1991 was 110,357 staff-years compared to its peak employment level of 125,185 staff-years in 1980 when the budget for the Department was only $25 billion. Thus, while our budget has expanded two and one-half times since 1980 we are carrying out activities with 15,000 fewer staff-years.

That represents a significant growth in productivity.

—In programmatic terms, we have faced many new challenges including new and ever more complex farm programs with higher farmer participation, implementation of new and expanded food assistance programs as I mentioned previously, a major effort to carry out new conservation programs and cross compliance requirements which fundamentally changed the nature of USDA conservation programs, major efforts to respond to public concern about food safety, and increased USDA involvement in the international arena.

Thus, in many ways it can be said that the Department's organization has served the Nation well. There is no doubt that the USDA structure has been a superb instrument for the delivery of programs which were amenable to its functional organization and most responsive to its decentralized management philosophy. There is also no doubt that we have had and continue to have a great many dedicated employees who have worked within this structure to carry out important programs for the people of this country. However, we must not let these very important achievements blind us to the fact that some organizational and management improvements may be needed at USDA.

While the functional and decentralized approach has served us well it has produced a lack of central information and control systems which are essential to effectively manage the Department. With current technology, we should expect to have both improved program operations and delivery and improved management systems for better policy and program decisionmaking. That is why I have moved aggressively since I took office to develop a meaningful inventory of these management issues and an effective program for dealing with them.

CHANGE FOR THE FUTURE IN USDA

In reviewing the management issues of the Department, I have concluded that they fall into a number of basic categories. Let me list those categories, the specific issues I believe exist in each category, and the actions I have taken to deal with them. The sum total of these actions constitutes what I call my management agenda.

In the first place, it has been apparent to me since I took office as Secretary of Agriculture that the Department needs stronger administrative management systems to assure that we provide the best possible services to our citizens and that we manage effectively within

today's increasingly difficult budget constraints. Specifically:

—We need to make the most effective possible use of automated systems. Annual Departmental spending to operate and upgrade its automated systems now approaches $1 billion. The lack of a strong oversight system at the Department level has meant that many of these systems are nocompatible and do not provide the USDA clientele the full benefits of automated technology. For these reasons, I have directed that our Departmental oversight of automated systems be strengthened. Immediate action is being taken to provide 10 additional expert staff at the Departmental level to assist agencies develop and implement information resources management plans that emphasize cross-agency coordination, data sharing and better service to USDA clientele. A continuation of this action is supported by an increase in the Department's FY 1993 budget for the Office of Information Resources Management now pending before the Congress. I have also directed the development and implementation of a Departmentwide information resources management strategic plan, so that all USDA automated systems will proceed in a manner that is consistent with an overall plan. Where necessary, we are prepared to withdraw the authority of line agencies to purchase ADP equipment and have done so in the case of one USDA agency. Also, from an information resources management standpoint, we are working to find ways to match our services to our clients' needs. For example, this spring we are testing eight projects in 16 locations across the Nation as part of our "Easy Access" program to improve our services and cut through red tape and paperwork in order to simplify people's lives and let farmers be farmers.

—Another area needing improvement is financial management. A Department as complex and diverse as USDA cannot function effectively unless it is well served by its financial management systems. I have invested a great deal of my personal time in the review of the 1991 Federal Managers' Financial Management Integrity Act reports submitted by our USDA agencies. As a result of that review, I am convinced that we need to take strong action to modernize our administrative accounting systems at the National Finance Center in New Orleans and to deal with a number of specific financial management issues in a number of our agencies. We have specific plans of action in each of these areas and are proceeding to modernize our systems.

—As you know the Department has frequently been criticized for its civil rights performance, both with respect to equal opportunity in the

employment of its own work force, and with respect to nondiscrimination in the delivery of its programs. We are making some progress in these areas as noted in some recent reports. According to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, USDA rose eight places in the Governmentwide ranking of minorities and women—from 31st to 23rd place out of 52 agencies. Women are now the fastest growing group in USDA. They now account for 40 percent of our workforce. Employment of minorities has also increased. They now represent nearly 17 percent of our workforce. Based on the first quarter of FY 1992, about one-half of all hires in the Department were minorities or women. These are positive developments but more needs to be done. I have directed that every USDA agency strengthen its recruitment programs and take all necessary steps to ensure that there is truly equal opportunity and access to employment with the Department of Agriculture. One important step we have taken toward this end is to strengthen the Department's relationships with the 1890 historically black land grant universities and with those universities with large populations of students of Hispanic heritage. I am convinced that these universities can provide an excellent source of recruitment for talented individuals who can make an important contribution to USDA programs. We are also strengthening the Department's oversight to ensure nondiscrimination in the delivery of its programs. Our Office of Advocacy and Enterprise will shortly issue new guidelines for compliance reviews to assure that equal opportunity is a fact with respect to USDA programs.

—One other administrative management area which needs improvement is the follow up of audit findings made by the Office of Inspector General and the General Accounting Office. When I took office, I found that there were large numbers of audit findings which had not been resolved. On further review, I concluded that the situation was the result of a combination of factors including a lack of diligence on the part of some of our agencies in resolving audits and an incredible scorekeeping system for audits which failed to give Department agencies full credit for actions they had in fact taken. We have launched a major effort within the Department to resolve outstanding audit findings. As a result of that effort, we expect the numbers of unresolved audit findings to be reduced substantially within the next 12 months.

Another category of management issues which we need to address is cross cutting issues. As I mentioned earlier in this testimony, the Department's organization has often functioned well so long as issues

were fairly narrow and could be confined within the expertise of a specific agency or subcabinet officer. As you know, we face a situation today where we must deal with an ever increasing number of broad issues which often require the coordinated efforts of significant numbers of USDA agencies and subcabinet officers. Short of a wholesale reorganization of the Department, the best way to deal with these issues is to provide for policy level oversight in those most important areas where such oversight is required. Toward that end, I have reinstituted the Secretary's Policy Coordination Council which was originally established by former Secretary Yeutter. The Council is chaired by Deputy Secretary Veneman and is responsible for assuring that there is necessary coordination of cross-cutting issues. To date we have taken specific action to ensure appropriate coordination of water quality, food safety, biotechnology, nutrition education, biofuels, and new uses for agricultural commodities. To the extent necessary, additional cross cutting issues can and will be added to the purview of the Policy Coordination Council.

Perhaps the one category of management issues which has received the most public attention has to do with the USDA field structure. As I indicated previously in this testimony, the Department is organized on a functional basis and is highly decentralized. The net result is that each of our USDA agencies has its own field system which operates in cooperation with its own clientele groups. It is entirely possible for the Department of Agriculture to have four or five separate offices in a single county. In recent years there have been efforts to collocate USDA offices in common office space and, in fact, many USDA offices are collocated. However, collocation does not mean that services have been fully integrated or that there is full sharing of resources. I am convinced that this fragmentation carries a high price in terms of cost to the taxpayer. It also creates a very cumbersome situation for USDA clientele if they wish to deal with more than one USDA agency, as they are often put to the task of visiting separate USDA offices and providing the same information repeatedly to each of those offices. Some have said that we have offices which are so small or for whom the workload is so light, that their continued existence cannot be justified. We are moving on three fronts to address opportunities to improve the Department's program delivery. Specifically:

—In the short term, we need to find ways to operate more effectively within the current field structure. In this regard, we are reviewing the operations of our local offices to determine to what extent resources are

actually shared, and to what increased extent they can be shared in the future. Currently, a high percentage of the county offices of Farmers Home Administration (FmHA), Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS), and Soil Conservation Service (SCS) nationwide are collocated. In fact, in my home State of Illinois 96 of ASCS's 97 county offices are collocated—95 of these offices are collocated on the same floor of the same buildings. We are investigating opportunities to expand the use of collocation where it has not yet occurred and to make better use of automated systems and other possibilities for improving our service to USDA clientele. As mentioned previously, one exciting aspect in the latter area is the ''Easy Access'' program under which we would provide improved services to our clientele through automated systems and other modern techniques.

—We also want to take a closer look at the USDA field structure in each of our States. I have recently reestablished within each State the USDA Food and Agriculture Council, made up of senior USDA officials in the State, and a National Food and Agriculture Council, made up of USDA Agency heads with field offices under the oversight of Deputy Secretary Veneman. We intend to use the Food and Agriculture Councils as a primary vehicle for looking at our overall field structure in any given State and recommending improvements ranging from the sharing of services to the collocation or consolidation of offices. In the last 5 years ASCS, FmHA, and SCS have closed over 300 offices in areas where service could be provided more efficiently by another office. Since 1979, the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) has closed over 30 locations and consolidated activities at fewer locations. In a related action, I have asked our ASCS, FmHA, and SCS State Executive Directors to review each county office and justify the need for their continued existence or recommend appropriate changes. Also, ARS will continue to review and recommend research facilities for consolidation or closure. I will personally review both the justifications and the recommendations for all of these actions.

—In the longer term we need to take an even more basic look at our field structure. The first step in such a review is to ask the USDA clientele what they think of our field services. I have asked Deputy Secretary Veneman to undertake this effort and she plans to participate in a number of town meetings around the country. One such town meeting has already been held in Salina, Kansas.

The last category of issues is simply the need to address specific

program management issues which may be unique to individual USDA agencies, but which are very important with respect to specific programs. These issues range from the error rates and trafficking in the Food Stamp Program to the need by our commodity procurement agencies to do a better job of tracking their inventories and reducing taxpayer costs wherever possible. Many of these issues are now receiving priority focus at the agency level.

NEED FOR CONGRESSIONAL AND EXECUTIVE BRANCH COOPERATION

As we move to resolve the management issues of the Department of Agriculture, I cannot proceed alone. Any meaningful improvement in the management of the USDA will require a coordinated and cooperative effort between the Executive Branch and the Congress.

One way in which we can work together is in taking a hard look at the constraints which inhibit good management in the Department of Agriculture. Some of these are established in the law or in Congressional reports, and some were placed there by individuals who wanted to protect a particular program or activity. As a former Member of the Congress, I can understand and sympathize with many of the concerns which created these provisions. They range from provisions which deal with single USDA field offices to overall prohibitions against changing regional boundaries or making even more significant changes to the USDA organization.

I hasten to add that not all management constraints are created in the legislative branch of the Government. I have, in fact, found that we in the executive branch are equally capable of tying ourselves in knots. For instance, I recently discovered that an internal directive prohibited the closing of county offices without the consent of the affected county committee. That directive is now being changed to make it clear that I have the authority to make those final decisions. I intend to include in our review a search for those things within our own control which operate to inhibit management reform.

Another area where we can cooperate effectively has to do with envisioning a basic structure for the Department of Agriculture to last well into the next century. This goes beyond the improvement of existing management systems or the office by office review of the field structure. We need to consider the fundamental organization of the Department

ranging from the jurisdiction of subcabinet officers to the organization of our agencies and field structure. One possibility is to create a single farmer service organization under the jurisdiction of a single subcabinet officer. I also realize that any such fundamental reform cannot be achieved without legislation. I have asked my subcabet to review the report on the Department's structure which was completed in 1985 and to give me their suggestions on these matters.

Following the thorough review of the information submitted by the State Executive Directors of the farmer constituent agencies, I plan to proceed by closing and consolidating those offices that can no longer be justified.

I would appreciate your help in quelling the fears which naturally arise in employees and clientele groups whenever the question of field structure and management are raised. I understand those fears. People are worried about their jobs. Clientele groups are worried about the services they receive. Senators and Congressmen will be concerned about the impact of such changes on their States or districts. We will implement changes with compassion and attention to the concerns of those who are affected by such changes. We would hope to provide the employees affected in any reorganization with new and more challenging jobs and rely heavily on attrition to make any workforce adjustments. This is only one part of true management reform. Financial management, information resources management and a completely modern field structure are items that will take some time to implement in the most efficient and cost-effective way.

In summary, I am optimistic about the future of the Department of Agriculture. It is a fine organization with a long history of valuable service to this country. In many respects the Department's traditional philosophy of cooperative, on-the-ground problem solving with people at the State and local level is a sound proven approach. However, traditional approaches need to be reviewed and adapted to current and future circumstances. I think we have a good opportunity to position USDA for service into the next century. I look forward to working with this Committee and with all members of the legislative branch toward this end.

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News Releases

U.S. Department of Agriculture • Office of Public Affairs

USDA TO INCREASE FEES FOR MEAT GRADING AND CERTIFICATION SERVICES

WASHINGTON, April 2—The U.S. Department of Agriculture will increase its hourly fees charged for voluntary meat grading and certification effective April 6.

Daniel D. Haley, administrator of USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, said the increases will offset increased salary and health benefit costs.

The revised hourly rates are:

—$34.00 for "base hours," (40 hours per week) for "commitment applicants," i.e., plants using graders full time;

—$36.40 for base hours for "noncommitment applicants," i.e., plants using graders intermittently or part time;

—$42.00 for "premium hours," i.e., overtime on any day and any work prior to 6 a.m. and after 6 p.m. weekdays for all applicants; and

—$68.00 for holiday hours for any user.

USDA's meat grading service identifies yields and quality of carcasses. Under law, USDA provides these services to users on a fee basis. The fees must approximate service costs.

The increases will appear as a final rule in the April 3 Federal Register. Copies are available from Meat Grading and Certification Branch, Livestock and Seed Division, AMS, USDA, Rm. 2638-S, P.O. Box 96456, Washington, D.C. 20090-6456; telephone (202) 720-1113.

Rebecca Unkenholz (202) 720-8998

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FGIS REVISES OFFICIAL GRAIN INSPECTION CERTIFICATION

WASHINGTON, April 2—The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Federal Grain Inspection Service is revising regulations under the U.S. Grain Standards Act to permit the issuance of inspection certificates on an optional basis.

The revised regulations will permit FGIS to offer a new, more "flexible" program called the official commercial inspection service. The new service allows users to tailor grain inspections to fit their individual needs. Applicants also can elect optional certification on single-lot inspections of grain in land carriers, containers or barges.

"Official certificates were not always needed for grain trading," said FGIS Administrator John C. Foltz. "Giving users this option will better serve the needs of the grain marketing system. This is an example of the user-friendly features of the new official commercial inspection service."

The interim rule will become effective when it is published in the April 3 Federal Register. Comments may be submitted on or before May 4, to George Wollam, FGIS, Room 0632-S, P.O. Box 96454, Washington, D.C. 20090-6454.

Dana Stewart (202) 720-5091

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USDA REVISES P.L. 480 TITLE I COUNTRY ALLOCATIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 1992

WASHINGTON, April 3—The U.S. Department of Agriculture today issued revised country and commodity allocations for the third quarter of fiscal year 1992 under Title I of Public Law 480, and the Food for Peace Program funded from Title I appropriations.

Christopher E. Goldthwait, acting general sales manager for USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service, said Congo, Costa Rica, Cote D'Ivoire, Guatemala, Jordan, Philippines, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka and Suriname signed agreements in this quarter. Goldthwait also said several new programs are being developed, including Title I agreements for Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania and Zimbabwe, and an additional Food for Progress agreement in Albania.

Besides the new additions to the Title I sales program, he said Yemen and Pakistan were removed from this fiscal year's allocation. Because

situations develop that can cause a change in country and commodity allocations during the fiscal year, these allocations do not necessarily represent final U.S. commitments with participating governments.

Countries eligible for the Title I program are those developing countries experiencing a shortage of foreign exchange earnings and having difficulty meeting all of their food needs through commercial channels.

Title I of P.L. 480 is a concessional sales program to promote exports of agricultural commodities from the United States and to foster broad-based sustainable development in recipient countries. The program provides export financing over payment periods of 10 to 30 years, grace periods of up to 7 years, and low interest rates.

The priorities for country allocations are based on several factors including need for food, undertaking of economic and agricultural measures to improve food security, and potential for becoming a U.S. commercial market. The allocations take into account changing economic and foreign policy situations, market development opportunities, existence of adequate storage facilities and possible disincentives to local production.

The Food for Progress program is an independently authorized program that may be funded with Title I monies. Albania, Nicaragua and Panama have signed Food for Progress agreements using transferred Title I funds that total $36.5 million for fiscal year 1992. Currently, Food for Progress programs are administered on grant terms. The program is used to support countries that have made commitments to introduce or expand free enterprise elements in their agricultural economies. These changes involve commodity pricing, marketing, input availability, distribution and private sector involvement.

For further information contact: Mary Chambliss, FAS, USDA, (202) 720-3573.

TABLE 1: Country and Commodity Allocations Public Law 480, Title I, Third Quarter, Fiscal Year 1992

Country	$Mil. Total	Undesig-nated	Wheat/ Flour a/	Rice
	(Mil.)	*(Mil.)*	*(1,000 Metric Tons)*	
Bulgaria	10.0	—	—	—
Congo	5.0	—	—	17
Costa Rica	15.0	—	80	—
Cote D'Ivoire	10.0	—	—	34
Dominican Republic	10.0	—	37	—
Egypt	150.0	—	897	—
El Salvador	30.0	—	152	—
Estonia	5.0	—	—	—
Guatemala	15.0	—	120	—
Guyana	5.0	—	42	—
Jamaica	30.0	—	86	31
Jordan	20.0	—	134	—
Latvia	5.0	—	—	—
Lithuania	5.0	—	—	—
Morocco	35.0	—	48	—
Philippines	20.0	—	—	—
Poland	10.0	—	—	—
Romania	15.0	—	33	—
Sierra Leone	7.0 b/	—	8	15
Sri Lanka	5.0	—	30	—
Suriname	8.0	—	17	—
Tunisia	10.0	—	56	—
Zimbabwe	10.0	—	—	—
TOTALS	435.0	0.0	1,740	97

Country	Feed Grains	Vegoil	Oilseeds Meals	Tallow	Cotton
	1,000 Metric Tons/Bales/Boardfeet				
Bulgaria	—	—	50	—	—
Congo	—	—	—	—	—
Costa Rica	—	—	—	—	—
Cote D'Ivoire	—	—	—	—	—
Dominican Republic	—	7	—	—	—
Egypt	—	—	—	—	—
El Salvador	27	—	—	28	—
Estonia	51	—	—	—	—
Guatemala	—	—	—	—	—
Guyana	—	—	—	—	—
Jamaica	80	—	—	—	—
Jordan	—	—	—	—	—
Latvia	51	—	—	—	—
Lithuania	51	—	—	—	—
Morocco	—	60	—	—	—
Philippines	—	—	96	—	—
Poland	—	—	—	—	27
Romania	—	—	—	—	18
Sierra Leone	—	—	—	—	—
Sri Lanka	—	—	—	—	—
Suriname	31	5	—	—	—
Tunisia	—	—	—	—	—
Zimbabwe	102	—	—	—	—
SUBTOTAL	393	72	146	28	45

TABLE 2: Country and Commodity Allocations
Public Law 480, Food for Progress Program, Third Quarter, Fiscal Year 1992

Country	$Mil. Total	Undesig-nated	Wheat/ Flour a/	Rice	Feed Grains	Vegoil	Meal	Tallow
	(Mil.)			*(1,000 Metric Tons)*				
Albania	17.5 c/	10	40	—	—	—	—	—
Nicaragua	25.0 c/	—	45	—	—	13	9	19
Panama	4.0 c/	—	—	—	—	7	—	—
	46.5	10.0	85	0	0	20	9	19

Allocated	$481.5 million
Unallocated reserve	$ 30.1 million
Total Commodity Program	$511.6 million

1/ Numbers may not add due to rounding.
a/ Wheat flour included as grain equivalent.
b/ Total includes $2 million in transportation costs.
c/ Total includes financing for transportation as follows: Albania—$2.3 million, Nicaragua—$4.9 million, and Panama—$800,000.

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NO-TILL RICE OFFERS HEADSTART ON PLANTING, PROFITS

WASHINGTON, April 3—Their neighbors may snicker when some farmers plant rice crops directly into a field of scraggly winter weeds, but those farmers will laugh all the way to the bank, a U.S. Department of Agriculture agronomist says.

In three years of field work at Stuttgart, Ark., rice yields were just as high when the fields were barely cultivated prior to planting as they are with the conventional practice of plowing weeds into oblivion, according to Roy J. Smith Jr. Smith is with the Rice Production and Weed Control Research unit in Stuttgard. The center is operated by USDA's Agricultural Research Service.

More significantly, net returns were as much as $100 higher per acre on no-till rice because production expenses such as fuel for equipment were lower, he said.

"We tried conventional tillage, where you go in right after fall harvest and till, then till again in the spring before you plant your rice seed," Smith said. "On other plots, we skipped the fall work and just tilled in the spring.

"We also had plots where we ran the cultivator over the ground only a couple of times before planting, and in other places we ran the cultivator through only one time—basically just stirring the weeds around. We employed no-till using chemicals to knock down the weeds two to three weeks prior to planting."

Yields for all three years were comparable for all tillage practices and no-till, Smith said, "even where we just went out and scratched around and the weeds looked awful."

The weeds present at planting are winter weeds that die as temperatures rise, so they offer no real competition for the sprouting rice plants, Smith explained. But he noted a difference in the activity of summer weeds as well.

"In the no-till plots, we had less ducksalad, a very competitive aquatic weed in rice," he said. "I don't know why, but it might be that the soil surface with no-till is simply not a satisfactory environment for ducksalad to germinate."

Farmers should be able to work in no-till fields more quickly after spring rains because the undisturbed soil is firmer, Smith said. Also, rice plants may emerge more rapidly in no-till fields, he added.

"We know that soybean plants will come up three to four days quicker in no-till fields than conventionally planted soybeans," Smith said. "It may be that there's more residual soil moisture when the soil hasn't been plowed and turned up to dry. Also, the no-till soil might be warmer.

"We've got a lot of farmers interested in this," he continued. "They're beginning to realize how they can save money and time."

Smith said studies on no-till rice will continue this year, including experimental plots on farms to test no-till's effectiveness on different types of soil.

NOTE TO EDITORS: For details, contact Roy J. Smith Jr., Rice Production and Weed Control Research, USDA, ARS, Stuttgart, Ark. 72160; telephone (501) 673-2661.

Sandy Miller Hays (301) 504-9089

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USDA ANNOUNCES FINAL COMPLIANCE FIGURES FOR 1991 ACREAGE REDUCTION PROGRAM

WASHINGTON, April 3—The U.S. Department of Agriculture today announced that producers on farms which had a total of 79.3 percent of the crop acreage bases established for wheat, feed grains, upland and extra-long staple (ELS) cotton and rice, were in compliance with the 1991 commodity production adjustment program requirements.

A total of 30.6 million acres were taken out of production and maintained in conserving uses. This includes 17.1 million acres designated as Acreage Conservation Reserve and 13 million acres idled under the 0/92 and 50/92 provisions. An additional 0.5 million acres were planted to minor oilseeds under the 0/92 provisions.

NATIONAL SUMMARY OF THE 1991 COMPLIANCE REPORT

Crop	Effective Base	Complying Base	Percent complying	ACR[1]	0,50/92			Net Flexed Acres[2]
					Idled	Pltd to Minor Oilseeds	Total	
	---mil. acres---		%	---million acres---				
Corn	82.7	63.3	76.5	4.7	2.6	0.1	2.7	-3.1
Sorghum	13.5	10.4	77.1	0.8	1.7	0.01	1.7	-0.4
Barley	11.5	8.7	75.9	0.7	1.4	0.1	1.5	-0.3
Oats	7.3	2.8	37.9	0.0	0.5	0.04	0.6	-0.2
Feed Grains	115.0	85.2	74.0	6.2	6.2	0.2	6.5	-4.0
Wheat[3]	79.2	67.6	85.4	10.1	5.5	0.3	5.8	-1.3
Upland Cotton	14.6	12.2	83.5	0.6	0.6	N/A	0.6	0.2
ELS Cotton	0.2	0.03	11.7	0.001	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Rice	4.2	3.9	95.0	0.2	0.7	N/A	0.7	-0.3
Total	213.2	169.0	79.3	17.1	13.0	0.5	13.5	-5.5

NOTE: Figures may not add due to rounding.
N/A = not applicable.
1/ Acreage Conservation Reserve.
2/ Normal flex acreage and optional flex acreage planted to another crop.
3/ Complying base includes 36.2 million acres of 'Winter Wheat Option.

Producers complying with the acreage reduction programs were required to reduce their plantings 15 percent for wheat; 7.5 percent for corn, sorghum and barley; 5 percent for rice, upland and ELS cotton. Acreage reduction was not required for participation in the oats program.

Producers had the option to plant permitted crops other than the program crop on up to 25 percent of any participating program crop acreage base without suffering a reduction in the size of the base. This acreage is known as "flex" acreage.

The permitted crops that may be planted on flex acreage are all crops except fruits and vegetables (not including fruits and vegetables used for green manure, haying and grazing and adzuki, faba and lupin beans), peanuts, tobacco, wild rice, trees and nuts.

Producers planted 4.0 million acres of flex acreage to soybeans, 0.2 million to minor oilseeds and 0.7 million acres to other non-program crops.

NATIONAL SUMMARY OF 1991 FLEXIBLE ACRES

Crop	Soybeans	Minor Oilseeds	Other Non-Program Crops	Total
		-----million acres-----		
Corn	2.772	0.029	0.201	3.002
Sorghum	0.198	0.007	0.057	0.262
Barley	0.080	0.065	0.083	0.228
Oats	0.081	0.017	0.023	0.121
Feed Grains	3.131	0.118	0.364	3.613
Wheat	0.567	0.074	0.255	0.896
Upland Cotton	0.107	0.0004	0.055	0.162
Rice	0.190	0.003	0.016	0.209
Total	3.995	0.195	0.690	4.880

For a complete copy of the tables showing compliance and flex data by commodity and state can be obtained by retrieving press release number 0331-92.

Robert Feist (202) 720-6789

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USDA MEETING ON FOREIGN ANIMAL AND POULTRY DISEASES SLATED FOR JUNE 2-4

WASHINGTON, April 3—The Secretary's Advisory Committee on Foreign Animal and Poultry Diseases will hold a public meeting on June 2-4 at the Holiday Inn Beachside, Key West, Fla. Meetings will be in the conference center from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. on June 2; from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on June 3; and from 8 a.m. to noon on June 4.

Discussion topics tentatively include regionalization and risk assessment in international trade; action plans for emergency preparedness and mock exercises; user fees and trade restrictions imposed because of swine infertility and respiratory syndrome.

Representatives from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Center for Import-Export and National Veterinary Services Laboratories will report on current activities related to foreign animal disease.

The committee advises the secretary of agriculture on actions that can be taken to prevent the entry and the establishment of foreign livestock diseases as well as means of controlling or eradicating outbreaks. USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service coordinates the committee, which includes representatives of the livestock and poultry industries and the scientific community.

Comments on meeting topics may be filed with the committee before or after the meeting by sending them to M.A. Mixson, Chief Staff Veterinarian, Emergency Programs Staff, VS, APHIS, USDA, Room 747 Federal Building, 6505 Belcrest Road, Hyattsville, Md. 20782.

Alan Zagier (301) 436-7255.

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USDA SEEKS COMMENT ON 1993 ACREAGE REDUCTION PROGRAM FOR WHEAT

WASHINGTON, April 3—The U.S. Department of Agriculture is seeking public comment on whether an acreage reduction program (ARP) for the 1993 wheat crop should be implemented and, if so, whether it should be 0, 5, or some other percent between 0 and 15 percent, said Keith Bjerke, executive vice president of USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation.

Any ARP decision must be announced by June 1. CCC is also required to propose options for the wheat program, accompanied by an analysis that includes estimated planted acreage, production, domestic and export use, ending stocks, season average producer price, program participation rate and cost to the federal government.

Details will be in the April 6 Federal Register.

Submit comments by May 1 to: Deputy Administrator, Policy Analysis, USDA/ASCS, Room 3090-S, P.O. Box 2415, Washington, D.C. 20013.

All comments will be available for public inspection in Room 3744-S of USDA's South Bldg., 14th and Independence, Ave., S.W., during regular business hours. A regulatory impact analysis on the 1993 wheat program may also be obtained from the above address.

Bruce Merkle (202) 720-4026

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NURSING MOTHERS NEED PLENTY OF PROTEIN

WASHINGTON, April 6—Nursing mothers shouldn't worry if the weight gained during pregnancy doesn't come off quickly after delivery, according to U.S. Department of Agriculture findings.

In fact, "it's not advisable for nursing mothers to go on a calories-slashing diet," said Kathleen J. Motil, a physician at the USDA Children's Nutrition Research Center in Houston. "They may be depriving themselves of the extra protein their bodies need."

Getting ample protein—which requires eating a few extra calories—appears to protect nursing mothers against the loss of muscle while they are breast-feeding their infants, Motil said at the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology meeting in Anaheim, Calif.

Motil said the research was prompted by her earlier findings at the

Houston center, operated by USDA's Agricultural Research Service. When nursing mothers were put on diets having the Recommended Dietary Allowance of protein, they had a protein deficit. That is, they lost more protein than they consumed, and the loss exceeded what they put in breast milk.

She was concerned that nursing mothers may be losing muscle. So she studied body composition changes in a group of 10 mothers over six months after delivery.

"Weight loss for the 10 mothers averaged only 2.6 pounds in six months, and none of the loss came from lean tissue," Motil said.

"But they were consuming about 33 percent more protein than the current Recommended Dietary Allowance for lactating women." That's a typical intake for healthy nursing mothers in the United States, she explained.

Based on intakes she has observed and her earlier studies of protein requirements, Motil said, "lactating women need about one-third more protein than currently recommended—or in the neighborhood of 1.5 grams per kilogram of body weight instead of the recommended 1.0 to 1.1 g/kg."

That translates to 100 grams of protein a day for a 140-pound woman compared to 65 to 70 grams of protein currently recommended, she said.

A cup of low-fat cottage cheese, 3 ounces of tuna white meat packed in water, or a 3.2-oz envelope of dried, non-fat buttermilk adds about 30 grams of protein to the diet.

The mothers in this study were consuming about 1.5 g/kg, she said. They maintained their weight on an average 2,400 total calories per day.

But certain groups of women may lack adequate protein, such as dieters, low-income women and adolescents who tend to snack a lot on less nutritious foods.

In her earlier studies, when nursing mothers were given diets containing 1.0 g/kg, they lost more nitrogen—a measure of protein—than they consumed, she said. But in another group of volunteers that got 1.5 g/kg daily, only half lost more than they consumed; the other half retained more than they consumed, indicating that this intake approximates the need.

Motil said there has been a paucity of good data on which to base a recommended intake for breast-feeding women in North America—a problem she is working to rectify. The current U.S. recommendation is

the same as that set by the World Health Organization. Both recommendations are based in large part on data that is derived from women in developing countries with average weights under 100 pounds, she said. "We're larger—averaging about 140 pounds."

Judy McBride (301) 504-8932

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GREAT PLAINS WIND EROSION DOWN SLIGHTLY FROM LAST YEAR

WASHINGTON, April 6—Wind erosion on the Great Plains was down slightly from a year ago during the period from November through February, a U.S. Department of Agriculture official said today.

William Richards, chief of USDA's Soil Conservation Service, said reports from the 10-state Great Plains area indicate wind has damaged 2.7 million acres through February, down more than 2 percent from the 2.8 million acres reported damaged during the same four-month period a year ago.

Implementation of conservation plans under the Farm Bill provisions and the Great Plains Conservation Program have resulted in fewer damaged acres throughout the Great Plains area. Conservation practices such as crop residue management, windbreaks, critical area mulching and planting of spring cover crops, helped protect the soil.

Many farmers in the Great Plains used emergency tillage—roughening the surface—to prevent erosion damage where there was enough moisture. This season more than 538,000 acres received emergency tillage. Montana reported six times more emergency tillage than its average and Colorado reported four times its average.

More than 15 million acres were reported in condition to blow this season, down 9 percent from the previous season.

Of the total land damaged, about 93 percent was cropland. The rest was primarily rangeland.

The southern Great Plains reported 844,000 acres damaged, 19 percent below last year's damage. The northern Great Plains reported 1.9 million acres damaged, up some 150,000 acres from last year.

SCS reports land damaged when small mounds or drifts of soil are observed, or blown soil covers vegetation. SCS conducts its survey during the wind erosion season in 541 counties in the Great Plains states.

The wind erosion season extends from November through May.

Below is a state-by-state summary of wind erosion damage between Nov. 1, 1991, and Feb. 29, 1992, compared to damage during the same period in 1990-1991.

WIND EROSION DAMAGE, NOVEMBER-FEBRUARY 1992 and 1991

	Counties Reporting	Acres Damaged Nov.-Feb. 1992	Nov.-Feb. 1991
Colorado	37	306,140	138,330
Kansas	105	239,940	138,120
Montana	40	646,330	507,571
Nebraska	21	25,330	91,440
New Mexico	19	2,000	14,400
North Dakota	53	959,168	867,553
Oklahoma	30	31,710	49,560
South Dakota	66	149,990	170,180
Texas	147	263,857	704,732
Wyoming	23	119,770	119,955
TOTALS	541	2,744,235	2,801,841

Ted Kupelian (202) 720-5776

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MEAT IMPORT ESTIMATE FOR SECOND QUARTER BELOW 1992 TRIGGER

WASHINGTON, April 6—Under Secretary of Agriculture Richard T. Crowder today announced the estimate of U.S. meat imports for the second quarter of calendar year 1992 is below the level that would require quotas or restraints on imports under the Meat Import Act of 1979.

Crowder said, based on U.S. Department of Agriculture estimates of available supplies and expectations of marketings by major meat exporters, imports of beef and other meats subject to the act during 1992

should total 1,286 million pounds—about 25.2 million pounds below the 1992 trigger of 1,311.2 million pounds. As a result, import restrictions are not required for 1992 at this time.

Crowder said conditions in this country and abroad affecting U.S. meat imports will continue to be monitored for the remainder of the year and that the third quarterly estimate will be announced about July 1.

The Meat Import Act of 1979 requires the president to consider restrictions on imports of certain meat items—primarily beef and veal—if a USDA quarterly estimate of meat imports equals or exceeds the trigger level determined by formula in the act. The table below summarizes monthly imports of meat subject to the act from January 1989 through March 1992.

Imports of Meat Subject to Meat Import Act

Month	1989	1990	1991	1992
	---------*Million pounds*---------			
January	74.5	90.7	66.0	97.6
February	80.3	97.1	85.9	99.3
March	88.5	115.4	114.4	91.2
April	97.1	118.0	97.1	
May	104.0	76.9	101.5	
June	103.4	100.8	145.2	
July	114.6	121.3	121.9	
August	111.0	122.2	144.6	
September	90.2	137.7	113.8	
October	83.6	99.9	173.3	
November	57.4	131.8	82.5	
December	136.8	141.0	84.4	
Total*	1,141.2	1,352.8	1,330.6	

*Totals may not add due to rounding.

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U.S. TO DONATE AGRICULTURAL COMMODITIES TO WORLD FOOD PROGRAM

WASHINGTON, April 7—Secretary of Agriculture Edward Madigan today announced the United States has pledged $80 million of U.S. agricultural commodities to the World Food Program, an agency of the United Nations.

''This donation reaffirms the United States' commitment to relieve hunger and malnutrition in the world's poorest countries,'' said Madigan. ''The nearly 190,000 tons of U.S. commodities will help the WFP respond to increasing emergency food needs worldwide, especially the refugees in Africa and Asia and those affected by the drought in southern Africa.''

The U.S. Department of Agriculture will provide approximately 140,000 metric tons of corn, 40,000 tons of sorghum and 10,000 tons of butteroil. The U.S. donation will consist of commodities and transportation costs, including internal transport, storage and handling. The supply period is fiscal year 1992.

The donation was made under Section 416(b) of the Agricultural Act of 1949, which authorizes the donation of surplus commodities owned by USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation to needy people overseas.

For more information, contact James F. Keefer, Foreign Agricultural Service, (202) 720-5263.

Sally Klusaritz (202) 720-3448

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